

Message Text

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ACTION DHA-02

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7881

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PK
SUBJECT: ALLEGATION OF SECRET POLITICAL PRISON IN AZAD KASHMIRGR

REF: STATE 178444

1. REUTERS STORY CITED IN REFTEL ABOUT EXISTENCE OF SECRET POLITICAL PRISON IN AZAD KASHMIR PROBABLY REFERS TO DALU CAMP, A FEDERAL SECURITY FORCE (FSF) DETENTION CENTER, MENTIONED IN PREVIOUS EMBASSY SITREPS, THAT HAS BEEN CLOSED BY THE MARTIAL LAW REGIME. ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD THERE WHILE BHUTTO WAS PRIME MINISTER VARY, BUT THE TOTAL AT ANY ONE TIME PROBABLY DID NOT EXCEED FORTY. NEARLY ALL OF THE DETAINEES WERE MEMBERS OF A RUMP GROUP OF THE RULING PAKISTAN PEOPLES' PARTY (PPP) FROM PUNJAB WHO WERE ARRESTED ILLEGALLY IN OCTOBER 1975 AFTER THEY SUPPORTED FORMER PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER GHULAM MUSTAFA KHAR, A BHUTTO RIVAL, AGAINST THE PPP CANDIDATE IN A PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTION.

2. THE CAMP WAS ESTABLISHED IN AZAD KASHMIR BY THE BHUTTO GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A USEFUL LEGAL FICTION. SINCE AZAD KASHMIR IS NOT CONSIDERED BY GOP TO BE INTEGRAL
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PART OF PAKISTAN IF ASKED ABOUT ANYONE HELD AT DALAI, GOP ATTORNEY GENERAL WOULD RESPOND THAT AS FAR AS GOP KNOWS, THEY ARE NOT IN PAKISTAN.

3. IT HAD BEEN RUMORED BEFORE THE MILITARY TAKE-OVER THAT SOME POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE BEING HELD AT DALAI CAMP AND THEIR RELEASE CAME AS NO SURPRISE. SEVERAL FORMER

PRISONERS HAVE FILED SUIT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT AND HAVE ALLEGED TORTURE. HOWEVER, THE CHARGES REMAIN TO BE PROVED. WE WOULD NOTE THAT, TRADITIONALLY, IN PAKISTAN POLITICS, PRISONERS OF THE SOCIAL LEVEL OF THOSE HELD IN DALAI ARE NOT MISTREATED.

4. MASUD MAHMUD, THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE FSF, HAS BEEN ARRESTED BY THE MILITARY AND A FULL INVESTIGATION OF THE FSF IS UNDERWAY. ALTHOUGH NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED, IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE MILITARY WILL BREAK UP THE FSF OR INTEGRATE IT INTO ONE OF THE REGULAR POLICE FORMATIONS.

5. WITH THE RELEASE OF DETAINEES FROM DALAI CAMP, NOW A CLOSED CHAPTER OF THE BHUTTO ERA, AND OTHER RELEASES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS SINCE JULY 5, EMBASSY BELIEVES THERE IS NOW, EXCEPT FOR THOSE BEING HELD IN HYDERABAD IN CONNECTION WITH THE WALI KHAN CASE, ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF REMAINING DETAINEES. MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION SEEMS TO BE FAITHFULLY IMPLEMENTING ITS PLEDGE TO RELEASE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WALI KHAN DEFENDENTS, ALL POLITICAL DETAINEES IN PAKISTAN.
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